2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

women are mostly composing forest songs, Sohrae songs, lagṛḍ songs, and dọṅ songs. 533
The forest-songs mostly divorced women compose, and they make girls their disciples, when 533
they pluck vegetables and bring leaves. The young men learn these from them. Also 832
among the forest-songs there are a very few ones that are good, otherwise they are only what is shameless; therefore they do not sing these in the villages or at home, and if they sing them here, people scold them. Elderly married women do not sing forest-songs, but foppish half-elderly women sing such in the forest together with the girls. By singing these also good people get their mind spoilt, and they are led astray. Remembering these, girls and young men also neglect their work, that is to say, a few, and when married, such people will not endure living together; they will be divorced.

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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women reply in chorus. So they go on till about 3 a. m. in the morning. 535

It must be added, however, that "Lagṛen" is a very stimulating dance, and on these occasions the youths and maids of the tribe get plenty of opportunities for love-making. Even the steps of the dance provide facilities for courtship, as the couples face side-ways and talk as they dance. And after the dances, parties in love retire into the woods. 535 832

The songs, sung on these occasions, are mostly love-songs. An illustration is given here:— [533] [539]

Nadiaka dhare dhare
Kahar ba*n*si baje,
Hai hai òntare kandiche.
Akhite dekhini, kanetò sunini,
Hai hai, amar òntare kandiche.

(Translation)

On the banks of the river,
Whose lute plays?
Alas! the heart weeps.
I haven't seen with eyes,
Nor heard with ears.
Alas, my heart weeps!

Nabin Mañjhi, Headman of Muruda, Mayurbhanj, said that when there are no rains, there are certain "Lagṛen" songs in invocation to the Rain- 533 731 782 789 [115]

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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So they dance on and on in a non-stop manner and may not finish before two days. 535

This dance may also take place as a mark of joy when volunteers help a Santal farmer who has no helping hand to aid him in his agriculture. According to custom, such help is always extended, and the farmer entertains the co-villagers at a thanksgiving party when "Dòñ" is danced after a liberal drink of rice-beer. 535 241 476 527

One who studies the "Dòñ" dances cannot but be struck by the fact that the suggestive hip and body movements, special to the dance, can have only one meaning viz. recreating in artistic forms the human urge to procreation. The very object of the dance, associated as it is with marriage ceremonies, was stated by an old Santal to be a form of magic, where the married pair might unite in love and affection and get children so that the Santals might increase in number. 535 831 [832]

Jhikà ènèc'

"Jhikà" is the closing item in a dance programme, just following "Dòñ". After a "Jhikà," the dance closes automatically. 535

Here men and women form a circle, but they do not entwine the hands. The musicians, as before, form an inner circle. The dancers take two

31 Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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left, as they advance forwards. But when the circles swing backwards, it is with a brisk picturesque

Danta Musicians

movement that they do so. Thus they dance from early morning till mid-day, without any girls as dancing partners.

"Danta" is no independent dance, but is indulged in as a relaxation. Women do not join these dances, as they cannot skip sufficiently as the steps require, and more specially because the songs that accompany the dances are frequently too amorous. Many of these refer to women and a very decent one purports as follows:—

Some boys go to a tank; they catch fish, roast and divide. While they eat the fish thus roasted, they give all the bones to women.

Mention should be made of some special steps of the *Danta* and their probable significance. It is noteworthy that when the dancers in both rows

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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535 change places and meet mid-way, they catch their
•832 hands and clasp them as is done by lovers in real life. And then they touch the various parts of the
[607] body and embrace as in a flirtation. These suggestive stolen sexual representations perhaps refer to the easy familiarities that the society sometimes permits between the husband's younger brother and the elder sister-in-law, (Ḍhàulià sàgài) and between the husband and his wife's younger sister. In making this suggestion, we are fortified by the opinion of an educated Santal.

Ḍahar ènèc'

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[221] This dance takes place sometimes between the first day after the new moon of "Magh" (Jan.-Feb.) and the full moon of Falgun (Feb.-Mar.), beginning with evenings and ending with mid-nights.

Gay men and women form a circle with their hands entwined, the musicians standing in the centre. One sees the circle taking two steps forwards, and then changing the direction to the left with one step, and next to the right again with a single step. The circle thus moves on and on in
[533] the dreamland of a moon-lit night. Men sing and women reply jointly. And so it goes on for about ten minutes. After a short rest, teasing belles sing again. The circles are formed again automatically and the dance proceeds afresh, while the

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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581 589 had nothing but admiration for bachelors and old maids.

832 826 *The Essentials of a Woman's Charms*

As we discuss the requisites for a Santal woman to be erotically attractive, we confess, we were a bit bewildered at the mass of confusing statements that came forth from a large number of Santals of all ages within majority. When everything is boiled down, it can be stated that to have the proper 'sex-appeal' to the Santal, a woman must be plump and bear the dark-brown complexion of a "*magur mach*" (*Magur* fish, Silurus Pelorious, Tilios) as a tipsy old fellow put it with a rare naiveté.[1] Her hips should be fleshy, and breasts, firm and hard, like "*bel*-fruit" (Aegle Marmelos, Correa). Santals generally like women possessing an oval type of face with cheeks having a tendency to bulge out. They hate faces called "Bagh muho" or "bilai muho" (faces like those of tigers and cats). Curiously enough, the average Santals displayed a partiality for a pointed nose with a medium bridge in their women. This is illustrated by the sying, "Mutae usual nana

1 Mr. Fakir Chandra Soren of Baskanali, Bankura, told me that the best complexion was "tel sanṛa" (dark grey glaze).

B Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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johotae jora lekae" (The nose high and thin, the cheeks as if dropping down). As regards eyes, they should be deer-like and a Santal would describe them as "Jil mènt' leka mènt' bareatae" (Two eyes like those of a deer). The pupils should be deep dark and not large in size. Santals evince a positive dislike for brown and grey pupils in the eyes of their women and the eyes characterised in Bengal as "pòtòl chera chokh" are at a discount. The ears should be thin and medium. The eye-brows, according to them, should have hair, but they must not be thick and long in growth and the eye-lashes must be thin and less in the lower lid. 832 826

A head of the darkest hair, thin and long, is what some middle-aged educated Santals would admire most in women-folk. We have, however, met some who professed a liking for girls with curly hair, but they opined that women have no corresponding liking for curly hair in men.

The type of the 'body beautiful' applauded in Sanskrit poetry is "straight as a stick." Santals, however, like a straight figure, but the body must not be thin as a stick. It should be, as stated before, plump but not fat, with a thin waist-line, fleshy hips and thighs. And above all, women must not trot or amble and their bearing should be dignified.

As regards the likings of Santals for the primary sexual characters in their women, the results of our

M Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (c.a. 1933-1939) 1902
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832 826 enquiry were a bit confusing. Whatever that may be, it appeared certain that they like a fairly large penis in men and a medium but tight vagina in women. In secondary sexual characters, the Santals were unanimous in stating that the men look at the breasts of women first of all, the eyes and hips being of next but important objects of attention.

Breasts of women are distinguished by custom by various names and symbols. A little detail may prove interesting to the reader. Imagine two Santal youths are passing by. A girl crosses them. One of the Santals may remark, "Ona bar paisa jutu jil." Literally it means "that share of meat worth two pice." It may be explained that in the countryside meat is sold in shares and the height of the meat, by a figure of speech, really refers to the breasts of the woman, who, if she chances to hear the expression will blush, for, she knows the meaning only too well. Breasts are classified in various types. The firm and hard breasts are called "Bèrèl siñjo nunu" (Breasts like the *Bel*-fruits, *Aegle Marmelos, Correa*), the type most admired and celebrated in folk-songs. Those standing up straight and strong are called *Ocot'*, which in Mayurbhanj Santali means "the hump of a bullock." Such types are also termed "Poraeni nunu" (Breasts like the White Lotus of the Nile, *Nymphoea Lotus* Linn.). A middle but a bit rounded size is poeti-

832 192 826

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1932
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cally enough termed "Kadam Baha." (*Kadam* Flower, belonging to a large deciduous tree, *Anthocephalus Cadamba, Bth, and Hook f.*). The variety falling down a little may be termed "Atur nunu" (Atur = to hang down ; nunu = breasts) or "Dandka Jhinga" (Jhinga = a cultivated food plant. *Luffa acutangula*, Roxb.) or "Kaita Jhinga." Unusual ones, are termed "Hotot'" (A species of pumpkin, *Cucurbita lagenaria*) or "Laua" (Gourds). Small and undeveloped breasts are classed as "Putka" (A puff-ball, a genus of fungi, *Lycoperdon*). The wrinkled ones are called "Jòknòt' nunu."

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The lure of breasts in a body beautiful, forms the subject of many folk-songs. One is quoted below:

Kora: Ul bele hòrmò tam ho,
Bel siñjo toà tam ho
Noà hòrmò noà toà do
òkòè lagat coñ

Kuri: Nalo babu jam tòr ase,
Nalo babu jam rag ase.
Noa hòrmò, noà toà dò,
Noà dò am lagat ge.
Noa kacha, noa panci noa kodo
Tòkòc kocòkò oyo atet'hò.

Kora: Nalo mairem tòr ase,
Nalo mairem rag ase,

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Noà kacha, noà panci,
Nalaṅg ge do laṅ oyo atet'hò.

(Translated)

Boy: Your body is radiant like the ripe mango
Your breasts are like two *bel-fruits*,
For whom is meant your body (for enjoyment), for whom the breasts?

Girl: Don't, O boy, don't speak about this.
Don't weep, O boy, for this.
This my body, these my breasts,
These are only for you meant.
This loin-cloth and this sheet,
Who will wear round and use?

Boy: Don't, O girl, don't say like this,
Don't you weep, don't you weep, O my girl,
This loin-cloth and the sheet,
Both of us shall use.

The other song in our collection refers to the changed condition of the breasts of a girl. It appears that two unmarried sisters used to sleep together in the "pinda" (outside verandah of a Santal house). The younger sister sings that due to the elder's persuasion, the size and appearance of her breasts have changed:

Am khàtir tege dàina piṇḍaredòlaṅ gitic' akandò,

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Setha lekan toa dàina pàilà lekaen. 832
Onatege rup dàinà raput' cabayen. 826
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(Translated)

For your sake, O sister, we two sleep in the outside verandah.
My breasts (that looked) like the 'setha' measures, O sister, have become big like 'pailas';
Our beauty, O sister, has got shattered and disappeared.

Presumably, the physical appearance has undergone a curious change as a result of having lovers at night. 832 [826]

In sex-attraction, it is a glimpse of the breasts that leads to intimacy amongst Santals. These have their primary appeal in dances like the Lagre*n*, when the two sexes mix together and their hands are joined. As the dance proceeds, the man gets warm and looks for a response from the girl-partner. He presses the wrists with a careful carelessness. If she presses in return, the man's elbow will frequently touch and press the woman's breasts. The understanding being thus complete, the girl now turns to her friends and complains of headache or of a tired knee, the man similarly offers an excuse and off they retire to some cover of leaves, away from the dancing party.

3: Mukherjea .O. Y:4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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833 826 As regards the part played by the breasts in the mechanism of tumescence and intercourse, it was gathered that the men fondle the breasts as a preliminary to intercourse. This is the first tactile contact preceding coitus. Kissing the cheeks and not the lips is the custom, and even then, it does not form an indispensable approach to the consummation. And although, the posture adopted in coitus does not stimulate the breasts, these are squeezed with the hands as will be clear from the folk-song quoted already (Dèr dèr ko men hili ho), nor does it permit of kissing, as the man sits under the raised legs of the woman.

832 301 As for the sexual basis of ornaments worn by women, wrist-ornaments are most liked by men, perhaps because of the tinkling sounds they produce. Older men seemed to like the "kharua" worn in the legs of women. The hair plays no unimportant part. Men comb their hair regularly by rubbing *mohua* oil, and after intervals of a week, they wash them with *markan basa* (the soapy mud).

832 826 [302]

832 Whatever that may be, to women it is the man of health and vigour who counts. He must have wonderful virility and potency to have her favours. Should a man be physically charming and possess all the arts of winning attraction, as capacity to tell stories, witty talks, proficiency in singing and dan-

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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cing—all these vanish as of no importance on the arrival of the true he-man. 832

We questioned the Santals to find out if the capacity to dance brings in erotic energy. They replied that with long continued dance, the body gets tired and sexual energy is diminished, but in mixed dances with women, they feel gradually more and more invigorated. [535]

At this stage, it may be worth-while to note how does the Santal woo. It was gathered that when a youth sees a maid and she catches his fancy, he speaks about his love to his *bili* (elder brother's wife) or *gòròm* (grand-mother), either real or so by village-courtesy. The women belonging to these grades of relationships are very obliging to assist lads in love, and as go-betweens, they meet the girl in question and inform her of the boy's fascination for her, not forgetting to please her by making presents of hàṇḍia, khòi (fried-rice), clothes or money in the name of the lover. The girl thus won over, she mentions a date and place when her lover may meet her in secret, say in a jungle or on the way or back to a *hat* (market). Even illicit love for a married man is arranged in this manner. Such kinds of love lead mostly to marriages by consent of parents as we have already seen in the chapter on marriage. In Mayurbhanj, at present, about eighty percent of marriages are arranged by parents 584 [607] [603] [839]

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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movement of Venus), should better be left to psychoanalysis.

Now the problem is, if the continual gratification of the desires dulls the edge of passion and transforms it into a lust. Is the sex-consciousness not impaired thus or does it remain generous, spontaneous and romantic? What we could gather from younger and middle-aged Santals seems to lead to the inference that the erotic life of the Santal is full of joy upto his fortieth year in the minimum and fiftieth in the maximum. Added to this love adventures, as in dances and jungles, give him the keenest delight.

Older Santals however, striking a different note, told us that joy in coitus remains till three children are born. Thereafter "they cannot shake the loins well". According to them abundant sexual energy comes at twenty years and it does not leave one, till one's thirty-fifth year. They agreed that those who commit lòṭghòṭi (illicit sexual intercourse) receive extreme joy from their adventures. On the point of virility, they opined that those who can eat two seers of rice at a sitting are more capable in the sexual act. Ordinarily, Santals cannot afford more than half-a-seer of rice at a meal.

As regards the repercussions on the emotions of the Santals should they be refused by girls when sexually approached, we gathered that normally the

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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152 832 youth who proposes a mating and is refused does not mind it seriously. It seems that another successful intrigue would cure the temporary disappointment. But should the boy who proposes, be in real love with the girl, he feels shocked and many such cases end in tragedies. One such concrete case was mentioned to us by some old Santals as having occurred at Jorku, Baripada, where a lad in love with [1962] a married girl asked her to leave the village. She having refused, the boy committed suicide by hanging. 831 We closely questioned educated Santals to find out experiences of a deeper character. But all that we gathered was that ties of the heart apparently very deep, slacken with time and life-long devotion to the lover or beloved, should the lovers be compelled to marry others, is rarely to be found. 831 588 An educated Santal told us a story of a love-affair between two prohibited clans viz. Tuḍus and Besras. He said that his cousin (a Tuḍu) married a Besra girl because he was in love, not minding the antagonism of the society. The lover declared that he would defy death for the sake of the girl. But the romance was shortlived. The girl did not live long. She died and the customary belief that such marriages are unlucky, had its triumph.

831 Whatever that may be, we consider it almost a reflection upon human nature that there are no

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Boy: The silver ornaments on your wrists, 583
the bracelets of silver on my hand, 533
We shall give to the ferry-man; even then we 539
two shall go away to foreign countries.

The Dawn of Romance

It may be interesting at this stage to record the 832
evidence of a middle-aged Santal, who in reply to 836
our questions gave a detailed description of the [124]
dawn of love and its working in the hearts of Santal boys and girls, although, we are afraid, there will be some overlapping in the treatment of the subject.

He said, "The first thing that a Santal boy and girl have when meeting together is, what is called, "Bepengete kusi" (the meeting of the eyes, *Cokshu Prati*, as termed in Sanskrit). Being thus attracted by the eyes, they have two or three glances when they arrive at an understanding. The boy wants to meet the girl who could fascinate him thus." He corroborated that a medium is now selected by [602]
the boy, being either his grand-mother, elder brother's wife or an aunt, real or by village-courtesy, and presents are conveyed with his messages of love. "The meeting," he added, "may take place at [535]
dances like the "Lagre," when the infatuated youth goes behind the circle where his beloved is dancing and stretches forth his right hand forward,

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1952
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832 836 535 which is a sign of request for a dance. The knot, where the hand has been stretched, breaks up and allows him to seize the hands of the girl of his choice. Should the understanding be deeper, the boy simply approaches the group and stands; the girl's eyes meet the boy's and she allows him to catch her hands. If the boy is not liked, the girl does not allow him to dance—he has no right to force his presence. Such dances motivate sexual stimulation. Those who desire sexual intercourse, press the wrists of the girl partner. Breasts are also touched and pressed as dancing proceeds with talks of love."

832 836 He gave us a very realistic description of the very first meeting of the lovers. Supposing a lad is at a field. A girl is gathering edible leaves. She catches his fancy. The boy takes up a pebble or a flower and throws it towards the girl. The girl feels surprised and exclaims, "Who threw it?"

The boy pleads, "I don't know. Something fell there."

The girl retorts, "I saw you throwing it. Nobody else was here so long. Who could have done it?"

Both of them then smile automatically and with it comes the understanding. The girl

31 Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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now says, "So you threw it. Why did you do it?" 832 886

The boy replies, "I meant you no harm."

"Why did you throw it? Tell me."

"I have something to tell you."

"Speak, what you will."

The boy then feigns and mumbles, "I have got a disease. Without you, there is no remedy."

"Name me the disease."

"You know it well enough."

At this stage they seem to know things well enough. The girl may prolong the ostrich shyness for a time. The boy makes his declaration. The girl replies that the spot is not a convenient one and may suggest a more suitable one and appoint a time, for she is ready. Thereafter, they seek opportunities and meet together to have their love-adventure.

Jungle-love

Love-adventures in jungles form the subject of a large number of folk-songs, called Bir Seren. Many of these relate to escapades, first sex-experiences and their results. These will dispense with the necessity of heaps of evidence to provide a correct perspective of the sex-life amongst the youths and maids of the tribe. 83 533

3: Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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The type that charms [Page 410]
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A Santal belle [Page : 410]

Photo : Tilak Bandopadhyay

[End Plate 12]